

1893, by the issuance on October 3d of centuries I. and II. Of this distribution sixty copies have been made of each century, and the centuries have now reached XII. This brings the total number of specimens handled in the two series up to about two hundred and seventy thousand.

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CURRENT NOTES ON ANTHROPOLOGY.

ALLEN ON HAWAIIAN SKULLS.

A CRANIOLOGICAL contribution of the first order of merit has just appeared in the Transactions of the Wagner Free Institute of Philadelphia, January, 1898. It is entitled 'A Study of Hawaiian Skulls, by Harrison Allen, M. D.' In this last labor of his busy and useful life Dr. Allen presented a model of patience, accuracy and clearness of statement which it would be difficult to parallel elsewhere. The characteristics of the skulls were exhibited comparatively, by a novel plan, that which he called the 'terrace method,' and which is a great improvement over the older graphic representations.

With his customary, far-reaching insight into the problems of racial anatomy, Dr. Allen took occasion, in the description of these Polynesian specimens, selected from ancient cemeteries, drawn, therefore, from a single stock of undoubted purity, to point out the changes brought about in skull form by social contrasts, by mental superiority and by differences of nutrition. Comparing them with later crania from the stock, he discovered the singular alterations produced in the skull by exanthematous diseases; and many suggestions stimulating to future students are scattered through his pages.

PRIMITIVE COSMOGONIES.

IN the *Correspondenzblatt* of the German Anthropological Society, December, 1897,

is a careful study by the Baron von Andrian on the cosmological and cosmogonical notions of primitive peoples. A wide collection of such myths and a critical analysis of their contents show in far separated centers many strange similarities. These, he argues, must be considered 'autochthonous,' *i. e.*, of independent origin, under the laws of thought and imagination. Later in time, when tribes commingled and the bards and priests sought to impart fixed forms to myths, borrowing arose over areas of varying size. It is the chief duty of the student of to-day to separate the 'common, psychological basic strata' from those which were added later by intercommunication. Quite late elements of mythology, such as the notion of the river Styx, or the tale of Orpheus and Euridice in Greek lore, belong to the primitive thought of the Hellenic stock and were not of alien origin. The article is replete with both erudition and suggestiveness.

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NOTES ON INORGANIC CHEMISTRY.

It has long been known that that the composition of the 'green iodid' of mercury is far from constant, and is not that which would be theoretically required for mercurous iodid, HgI . Varet has considered that the mercurous iodid exists in two modifications, a green and a yellow, which can be changed the one into the other. The matter has been studied by Maurice François, who gives his results in the *Journ. pharm. chim.* The mercurous iodid is of a pure yellow color, and is readily obtained in this condition by the action of potassium iodid upon an excess of mercurous nitrate in the presence of dilute nitric acid. The green color of the salt as usually obtained is due to the presence of free mercury, which may run up to a very large proportion. It might not be without interest to